

PART  
OF A  
LETTER  
FROM  
*ROBERT ADAIR, Esq,*   
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
CHARLES JAMES FOX;  
OCCASIONED BY  
*MR. BURKE's MENTION*  
OF  
LORD KEPPEL,  
IN A RECENT PUBLICATION.

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## P A R T

OF A

## L E T T E R, &c.

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SUCH, my dear Sir, is my criticism, (it amounts to no more) on the first seventy pages of Mr. Burke's recent publication. With regard to its concluding passages, and to what is there said of Lord Keppel, this indeed is "high matter," and deserves from me very deep attention, and very serious investigation.

A 2

If

If Mr. Burke had been content with “un-“ plumbing” a dead Russel, and hewing him into grape and canister, to sweep down the whole generation of his descendants for two hundred and fifty years, I might have been silent. It is not to him, who thus tears up, and scatters their ashes in the air, that it is given to write their epitaphs. History has taken that office into her own hands. What the value of the former Russels may be, is a thing long settled. It is engrossed and enrolled. Mr. Burke cannot *ever against the record*. It is intermingled with the trophies of our valour, and stamped upon the charters of our freedom. In the moments of his fondest affection, were Mr. Burke disposed to honour with such feelings the Russel of this day, he could not wish him a prouder distinction than that he should live, and if necessary should die, exactly like the illustrious author of the Bill of Exclusion.

If,

If, too, Mr. Burke had been satisfied with an appeal to the memory of Lord Keppel, by way of sanction to the recent favours conferred upon him by the Crown, no man, and least of all any of that noble Lord's connexions, would have had a pretence for objecting to it. That aided by the consolations of pious hope, and the assiduities of tender sympathy, they may "assuage" now, and long hence, his cares, is my very sincere and fervent wish. But when the view and purpose of that appeal is to sanction, by Lord Keppel's authority, the whole transactions of the last four years of his life, you will acknowledge that it assumes a more serious shape to those who, loving Lord Keppel not less than Mr. Burke, have thought that they could honour his memory no better than by remaining precisely where he left them in their political connexions. I, Sir, by far the least among many others, am one, nevertheless, who is entitled to some reason from Mr. Burke for this

this proceeding. Why, I may ask him, has he thus called upon a name, which, but the other day as it were, has descended into the tomb; a name which history cannot have mellowed enough, as yet, to save it from the surviving, though puny, efforts of cotemporary calumny? Why has he burst the earments of a sepulchre scarcely closed, and sent forth a “Spirit of health” among us, to shake and convulse the world with pestilence and war?

To you, Sir, I may safely say, that to recall in me the love of what is right, and the fear of what is wrong, I need no prophetic warnings in that venerated name. Never has his image been absent from me in any one action of my life. Whatever in that life may look like fidelity or constancy, (I am able to shew nothing more)—has been derived from the example of his public honour, and of his public sufferings; from the precepts of his

his “ plain, unsophisticated, natural understanding;” and through the protecting goodness of his heart, turning itself into a thousand amiable forms, and passing his virtue with a quick and almost playful change, from the enlarged benevolence of patriotism, to the details of the kindest charities of social commerce. It was under his roof, in compliance with his desire and my own eager wishes, that I was first made known to Mr. Burke. From that day, until the fatal moment in which, in debate on the Quebec Bill, he renounced all intercourse with you, I cultivated, industriously and assiduously, the society of this extraordinary man; and pressing as often upon his indulgence as the fear of incurring the censure of importunity would allow me, I strove to understand this great master; to possess myself, as well as I could, of his way of thinking; and gathered up, with diligence and care, the crumbs which fell from the rich table of his conversation.

The

The revolution of France has drowned the whole world in tears. I have had my share. No matter now what has caused them. Never shall adversity put into the mouth of one whom you distinguish by your friendship, the whining, whimpering acknowledgment of a pang his courage should disdain to feel. But there are bounds to all things: and I give to the grey hairs, and to the sacred sorrows of Mr. Burke, what the riches and the ribbons of degenerate Whigs shall never, never extort from me.

I will confess to you then, Sir, that with many and strong prejudices in favour of Aristocracy, whether considered as a sentiment, or a constitutional principle, not a lord of them all in their separation from you, gave me half so much pain as did Mr. Burke. That separation oppressed me with deep sorrow indeed. All that was left me then in political pursuits which might be regarded as

a source of pleasure, was the mere dry sense of acting up, in my humble walk, to the duties I found in my way. Hard would be the condition of our being if this consolation were denied us; if fortune, disappointing our honest efforts, and but too triumphant over our dearest feelings, should take from us the reward of virtue too! But still in these cases a mind rightly turned will be severely harassed. Friendship alone cannot heal the wounds which itself inflicts. At the death of one beloved offspring, our affections are all routed and dispersed: it is only by slow degrees that they come back to their allegiance, and suffer themselves to be gathered up again, and concentrated in that which is spared to us. Long accustomed to look up to Mr. Burke and yourself, as to the luminaries of this age of ours, and as equal and necessary parts of our system, it was not enough for me, when I lost the dazzling and delightful blaze o the one, to console myself with even

the splendid and steady light, the genial and vivifying heat of the other; no more than I could answer that sudden call upon my philosophy, which should bid me be satisfied at not finding myself in total darkness because a stroke of lightning had not extinguished both my organs of sight at once.

From the whole sharpness of this cruel civil conflict, I felt myself, however, very considerably relieved. Honour and duty seemed to me so clear, as to leave my affections, if not free from the pain of the decision, yet wholly unembarrassed by any doubts as to the decision itself. I believe myself sufficiently impartial to have weighed, to a very scruple, the case as it stood between Mr. Burke and you. Indeed you were severely used. Forced into discussions on the subject of a revolution which then was but as an experiment making by France on her own body; delivering yourself when so forced, vehemently, it is true, and

and boldly, in favour of the general rights of mankind, but cautiously and prudently with regard to the operation of their principles in this country, I heard you, and your friends, and your views, and the public cause you had embraced, assimilated with all that was hateful, deformed, bloody, and ferocious in the anticipitated French democracy. No distinction ! No toleration ! No memory of past services !—but day after day you was brought down to the House of Commons, in the face of ungenerous adversaries, and as a spectacle and sport for them, to be put upon your defence, not as a criminal of an hour's detection, but as one whose whole life had been a scene of perjuries and treasons which the troubled conscience of one of his accomplices had engaged him to discover. Little does it signify what Mr. Burke's conduct meant ; this was its effect. Mr. Windham, who could have defended you, who had countenanced this revolution by his

presence, fearing Mr. Burke, was silent. The Duke of Portland, hoping the best, but unwilling to drive Mr. Burke to extremities, was silent. A watchful enemy, master of all the powers of the country, was traducing you to it. Speeches were made and circulated in your name, applauding what the framers of them *knew* you neither had approved, or even read, the French constitution; which they accused you at the same time of wishing to introduce instead of our own. We remember their argument: it was worthy of their cause—“ *He who praises any change,*” it was said, “ *must approve all the consequences to which that change may lead; and he who approves those consequences, must mean to imitate them.*” By these pestilent sophistries, the high principle of your whole life was attacked. Your fame was undermined. The figure you had just made in the questions connected with our famous dispute with Russia, had finally set at rest all idea of rivalry with

with regard to powers, (if indeed any such rivalry had ever existed,) between you and your opponents. What in foreign courts had been long acknowledged, was at length listened to in this, and received universally by your countrymen. At the close of that dispute, you stood beyond compare our first and foremost man. I will venture to say, that from the date of that business, no person dreamt of pledging this country to foreign objects of any kind, much less to a war, without not only your full concurrence, but your efficient co-operation. All perishable ! In little more than one short twelvemonth afterwards, with the intervention of no circumstance questionable either to your wisdom or your honour, these miserable arts had prevailed ; the loud vehemence of anger joined itself to the “ vermin whispers” of malignity : and he, whose “ word” but on the yesterday might have “ stood against the “ world,” was reviled, tumbled down, and trod

trod upon,—“ and none were found so poor  
“ to do him reverence.”

At this trying period, you felt, indeed, the loss of those whom Providence had hurried into a too early grave. Then was felt the loss of Sir George Saville, whose vigorous and distinguishing mind would have blown away the tribe of buzzing sophistries which teased and worried into alarm all the “ plain “ unsophisticated understanding” of the nation. Then was felt the loss of the Marquis of Rockingham—firm, temperate, dauntless, the correct decision of whose judgment arose from the sincerity of his heart, whose authority would have stilled those fretful passions which stealing insidiously upon our reason, have swelled, it is to be feared, our differences into implacable enmities. Then was felt the loss of Lord North, who, whether tugging with you in contest, or acting with you in amity, found that these were but different

roads that led him to the same point of esteem and confidence in your public principles. Then was felt the loss of George Byng, whose integrity no man could shake, whose sagacity no man could surprize, whose perseverance nothing could elude ; the vigilant detector of all double-faced intrigues, the faithful trustee and pledge of all honourable engagements. Then was felt the loss of the mild benignity, the scrutinizing good sense, the steady faith, the awful admonitory persuasion, the proud, animated, uncompromising honour of Lord Keppel.

These, Sir, were *your* losses ; and not less to your ill-fated country, than personally to yourself. One of them was, in part, mine. Yet although deprived of his living counsel, I had carried his sentiments too long in my heart, and his form was too often before my eyes, to leave me in doubt as to the part I was to follow in that eventful crisis of our common

common fate. I consulted at that shrine, and believe not that his venerable shade now frowns upon my page.

It is, indeed, very material for me not to be wrong in this belief. If Mr. Burke conjectures rightly of the probable conduct of Lord Keppel, you, Sir, are acting under his censure ; but I under his malediction. This is to me a consideration by far too serious to admit of my binding myself down by any of the common restraints which otherwise, for a thousand reasons, would have kept back my name from the list of Mr. Burke's antagonists. It would at all times have been, in me, highly unbecoming to vex a man of his size with the petty controversy of paragraphs and pamphlets ; it were violating a sanctuary to strike at him in his afflictions. Mr. Burke shall do justice to my motives. They are nothing but pure self-defence ; for no man has a name too small to merit his own care. I hope not

to depart from this line of conduct in the few considerations here thrown together and submitted to you, and which must touch, in a degree, the great public questions which Mr. Burke has necessarily connected with his mention of Lord Keppel.

Let us begin with what is pleasing. Mr. Burke's handsome tribute to his memory demands from all those to whom it is dear the warmest and the truest thanks. I feel gratitude the more, perhaps, from being aware that Mr. Burke in this has acted a very manly part: that he has come forward in generous disregard of all those considerations which might have influenced others, if not to disavow their share in the public events which distinguished the last years of that noble Lord's life, at least to abate much from their former warmth and enthusiasm in the praise of them. Posterity must consider Mr. Burke as one of the historians of the present age. It shall be no mean honour for

Lord Keppel, that, in these unhappy times in which great questions of rights, of duties, of powers,—once furnishing amusement to the learned leisure of speculatists, but now, by the blind passions of tyrannous man, brought home, with their whole frightful train of practical consequences, to our very hearths;—that, while these questions are bursting asunder the bands of the firmest friendships, and tearing a whole world in pieces, the greatest characters among us contest with each other nothing more stiffly than the foremost place in extolling, and blazoning, the merits of that incomparable man. For the share, and it is no small one, which Mr. Burke will have in rearing to after-times the noble edifice of his fame, my heart shall never fail to express itself as becomes me.

Why was not this panegyric confined to those actions, full of honour and glory, which distinguished that life from its commencement to its close? Is the ascent to this eminence,

eminence, then, so little rugged that we may feel justified in asking our friends, when they have gained the summit, to begin 'afresh the toil and peril of a new journey, and be continually running up and down for our amusement? Was it a wise saying of the Grecian sage, that no man could be counted happy until his last hour? Or, is it an unwise corollary to it, that when death has set his seal upon a great character, pious friendship will not tear it off, discreet morality will not unfix the securities for all honest fame, or weaken the inducements to all virtuous action?

He that shall undertake to tell us how Lord Keppel, and all the great and good men we remember, would have conducted themselves in our disastrous times, must first prove, that such as we now unfortunately witness, would have been the nature and complexion of these times. If no wise or good man had died from Solon, downwards,

it is possible we might never have had a French, or an American war. It were to think ill indeed of man's nature, and the condition of his being, to pronounce that the resuscitation of all the ability and virtue that ever existed, would produce no change for the better in the moral practice of the world. But these lead to wide speculations ; to thoughts full of difficulty and doubt, with which few men, especially the followers of the present dispensation, will be very willing to trust themselves, or deem it quite safe to encourage in others. These are inquiries which, for one, I must acknowledge myself not bold enough to meet in all their relations. It will become me, and those who are like me, far better, to be content with the advantages which are always within the reach of those who habituate themselves to the contemplation of the actions of the illustrious dead. Instead of figuring to ourselves their possible conduct in difficulties which we live, and are here, to meet without them, let us believe that it were

not

not ill to improve our sense of honour and virtue to study, and understand them thoroughly in the way of example.

I am aware that there is a saving clause for Mr. Burke's whole hypothesis: that he builds upon Lord Keppel's concurrence with him, with the reserve of interpreting "the future by the past." There will be nothing disadvantageous to my argument in admitting to its full extent Mr. Burke's appeal to Lord Keppel's *experience*. The first difficulty in the case will then be with Mr. Burke, on whom it will rest to shew that Lord Keppel would have trusted himself without hesitation to a government *substantially* in the hands of the same men who conspired against his honour and life. In what age do we live, if it be necessary to remind Mr. Burke of those events which accompanied that noble Admiral's acceptance of the command of the channel fleet, and led to his trial at Portsmouth? Let us speak out. Men may change their op-

nions about measures to be pursued for the public interest. They may change them with regard to the prudence, at certain times, of their own past conduct. Excuses will be found for every species of versatility, whether penitentiary or prospective. But without new evidence, men must not reverse the judgments they have passed on facts. This were a degree of indecorous levity for which no justification could be offered. No allegation of party disputes can be admitted to palliate such a breach of the first rules of moral conduct, such utter contempt for all decency and all veracity. When Lord Keppel was appointed to the command of the channel fleet, was he betrayed, or was he not? Which did Mr. Burke believe? Among that great man's counsellors was Mr. Burke *the only one* who, upon his acquittal, *disented* from the advice then given him not again to hoist his flag while a system prevailed in the government of the country of which he was the marked and devoted sacrifice? Good God,

Sir,

Sir, is it possible that, of all men living, I must ask these questions of Mr. Burke? Is it just now that he who would, as he says and I believe, have followed that injured officer to the quarter deck with as much pride to think he belonged to him in that hour, (and such an hour!) as he felt afterwards in his triumphant acquittal, is it, I say, possible that Mr. Burke should just now begin to consider that memorable trial, and all that preceded it, and all that came after it, as a mere common question of military conduct? Can Mr. Burke be ignorant of what now keeps us all silent, or will *he* dare to speak all he has dared to think upon that subject?

That personal resentment would have swayed Lord Keppel when his duty was in question, no man believes. But could he have performed that duty effectually? Could he have acquitted himself to his Sovereign of any services expected from him under the prevalence of the present, or any system which

which has existed for the government of the country since his decease? Would he, for instance, have had any prospect of better treatment than Lord Fitz-William has experienced? After the fullest promises of co-operation and support, what one security more could he have had for their performance than that noble Lord enjoyed? Is it likely that his honour would have been a bit safer? or that any more ceremony would have been used in thwarting all his measures, and finally betraying him?

Lord Keppel may have forgiven all he suffered from this system. But those who knew how to love him, should know better how to estimate his wrongs. The purest Christianity exacts no more of us than that we should forgive our own enemies. The charity which forgives the slanderers and destroyers of our friends, is ever to be looked upon with a suspicious eye. There is in this magnanimity something so ductile; this generosity

generosity is so cheap in the practice, and its debts are so easily paid, that men commonly prudent will suspect it from the very clink of its currency. The authors of that most wicked conspiracy against Lord Keppel's life and honour, never, perhaps, will be dragged into light. If they could, surely they would receive no mercy from Mr. Burke. As it is, I am certain that he, as little as I, would press forward in the company of some of Lord Keppel's less mindful connexions to pay court to its known instruments, and fight under their false colours upon a hustings at Covent Garden.

Doubting very much that Lord Keppel would have followed in Mr. Burke's wake in this hurricane which seems to toss us all where it wills, and wildly laughs to scorn all human prudence, he has stated some matters, nevertheless, which may be readily conceded. That he would have supported, to his utmost, the reward which Mr. Burke's long services

have at length received, there can be little question. Nay, more:—confident that he would have joined no cabinet at any time, without express stipulations for public objects, I can easily believe this would have been one of the very first of them: that the more, or the less, could have weighed in his mind only to Mr. Burke's advantage.

So far it may be permitted us to answer for those who can answer for themselves no more. But nothing is safe from restless man! He twists all philosophy to his fancies: he bends all nature to his systems: he spares not the peaceful neutrality of the tomb, but lights up the ashes of our fathers, and breathes havock and fury through the “dull, cold ear” of death itself.

I conceive Mr. Burke to have no better guide to Lord Keppel's sentiments upon a question such as the present frightful war now exhibits, than you have, or than I.

Indeed

Indeed it is impossible not to remark the very extraordinary scheme on which he has built his whole speculation. He talks of Lord Keppel as if no such man as yourself had existed. It is not, I am afraid, new to Mr. Burke to consider you, and your's, as sworn brothers of the *sans-culotterie* of Paris. But it is condemning you to oblivion indeed, to state any case of Lord Keppel's public or private feelings in which you should count for no more than *a cat's whiskers*.\* Let me not be thought to diminish his friendship for Mr. Burke, by recalling his attachment to yourself. The heart of Lord Keppel, like the expanse of Heaven, was common to you both: his benevolence, like its gentle dews,

\* The expression is Mr. Burke's. It was applied by him, in a debate which took place soon after Lord Loughborough had accepted the seals, to shew in what estimation he held the sacrifices of principle which that learned Lord was thought to have then made. The cat is supposed, by naturalists, to have *no use* for his whiskers. But Mr. Burke had nothing sarcastic in his meaning.

fell upon you both alike. You, Sir, must have remembrances of your own which tell you what *must* have been his affection for Mr. Burke ; and I, and many more can tell *you*, that, used as was his mind to mix you in all the associations of kindred love, he forgot, at times, that there were yet nearer holds by which nature might have grappled you to his heart.

I may be allowed to question whether, if he had lived, those fatal differences in the Whig party would have taken place, which have helped to deluge the universe with blood. Much of this mischief may be attributed to the destruction of that party ; and the foundation for that destruction was laid when Mr. Burke announced in Parliament his separation from you. But if his mild authority had failed to appease the irritated mind of Mr. Burke after he had slept over the night of that fatal day, well am I assured that he would never, as others have done,

have

have taken up Mr. Burke's resentments at second hand. It may not be difficult to conceive in Lord Keppel all of what nature in him was capable of scorn and horror for the *sans-culotterie* of Paris ; but he never would have sought through accusation and clamour, and even disguised menace, to drive and bully you into a connexion with that, or any other *sans-culotterie* ; or, by every misrepresentation, by every appeal to the passions good and bad of a deluded people, have laboured to persuade mankind that you, and your cause, were identified, and made one, with " that horrid medley of impiety and " vice." Never would he have raised his arm to drive you without the pale of the constitution :—never would he have whistled off the proud Monarch of the air " to prey " at fortune," with the cloud of obscene Cloots, and Marats, and Orleans, and Robespierres, the owls, and the bats, and the carion-crows of the French revolution.

I am

" I am ignorant in what particular that which  
 Mr. Burke states generally as Lord Keppel's  
 way of thinking about hereditary nobility,  
 differs from your own. Generally speaking,  
 I have always understood you to differ very  
 little from Mr. Burke on this subject. If you  
 did not exactly agree with each other in dis-  
 cussing the question of the *new-created* and  
 constituted Canada nobility, I should be in-  
 clined to attribute much of that disagreement  
 to the heats of the times. I take it that Mr.  
 Burke will now grant you the benefit of his  
 own principle, as far as it applies, " that the  
 " *prejudice* of an old nobility is a thing which  
 " cannot be made: that the *thing itself* is  
 " matter of *inveterate* opinion, and therefore  
 " cannot be matter of mere positive institu-  
 " tion."

What Lord Keppel thought upon the inter-  
 ests of Europe in general, and the particular  
 importance of the connection of Holland with  
 this country, was no secret. It will be dif-  
 ficult,

ficult, unless I very much mistake the whole system of your foreign politics, to shew in what he differed from you with regard to those interests, and to that connection. High as Lord Keppel held his head against the domineering ambition of France, I believe the history of your political life will shew your's to have been equally lofty, and not to have stooped beneath even the proud elevation of Mr. Burke's.

On these general topics it may be the more granted us to converse, because they are matters of known and recorded publicity. We are not disputing what were Lord Keppel's *principles*, nor what are your's. The world is in arms, not so much for principles, as for their application. All the contests of our times turn upon this point. It is hence that wisdom has a different province. Cases are now decided *upon their circumstances*. With every readiness, therefore, to grant Mr. Burke the privilege of answering for Lord Keppel's *principles*,

principles, we certainly cannot, without supposing in Lord Keppel the entire use of his faculties, permit him to apply those principles when such application must necessarily be independent of the circumstances of their cases. But if it be thus difficult for Mr. Burke to answer for Lord Keppel's *judgments*, what will it not become, when descending into his heart, he undertakes to be responsible for his *feelings*? How infinitely more difficult, if those feelings are to be measured upon questions of *general humanity*, *partially stated*? It is to state such questions partially, to narrow what in its principle is so universal, and in the present use we have for it, so little capable of any limitation at all. To take from Lord Keppel all sensation of compassion for the fate of the Rochefoucaults, and the Noailles, and the Fayettes, not more fairly associated than the Duke of Bedford perhaps with Mr. *Philip Egalité*, is venturing a good way; but to inculcate that "those myriads " of worthy men," many of them most truly

truly so, but who are not more fairly said to have “perished *by their means* in prisons and “on scaffolds,” or to be “pining in misery “and exile,” are the only persons on whom compassion ought to operate in a well-formed mind, is a stretch almost beyond the bounds of vulgar understanding. “We are not “made,” says Mr. Burke, “to pity the oppressed and the oppressor. Lord Keppel could “have felt no compassion for the *miscreant parricides*.” Is here the whole question? Who is free from the consequences of this dire experiment to force France into unconditional subjection? *Quæ caret ora crux nostro?* Would to God that the immediate victims of these troubles had none to share with them, and diminish, the scanty portion that benevolence can yet bestow! But such is the sad diversity of woe, so many and so hideous are the shapes it takes, that panting and exhausted virtue toils after it in vain! It is much to be feared that in the distraction of our feelings at the numberless and unheard-

of instances of want to be met with every day, we risque the loss of the feelings themselves. There is something of a fashion, or habit in charity, most cruelly counteracting its principle, which, independent of all questions concerning means, obliges us to narrow our views, and limit our objects, if we would preserve the sentiments which lead to its exercise at all. We get case-hardened by the perpetual shifting from the extreme of one sort of distress to the extreme of another. It is observed that the mind, when under the pressure of various calamities at once, often bears them better than if it had only to struggle with one at a time. Acting towards others as the first instinct of our being makes us act for ourselves, the sight of misery in various shapes is sure to blunt the finer edges of our sensibility. Much of it is lost in classing its claims. We get languid; at last peevish and querulous; and finish not unfrequently by hating the wretchedness we cannot relieve.

I fear

I fear that it already begins to be so, even with the generous nation we call our own. I have heard that the French clergy, and most of the Emigrant nobility, with whole families now in this metropolis, are in a state of pinching penury that no tongue can tell.— Why is this so? Is hospitality become tired? Or was there any thing of party in the sentiment that first bade them welcome to our gates? I will believe neither: I am afraid that the causes of our seeming neglect of them lie much deeper; that they are to be found in the sure operation of the principles above-stated, and in the situation of the poor of *our own* country, whom this horrible war is starving and undoing by whole generations. In the present state of the prices for the very first necessaries of life, I am bid to ask myself at every meal, what proportion of the population of this island can earn enough to content the mere cravings of nature?—Well, but this is only temporary. Temporary! Who dares to offer this insulting consolation

to a ruined people? Who shall presume to calculate the mischiefs of suspending, even for a month, the whole course of our œconomy, and making the industry of a nation a burthen upon its wealth? Temporary! Who that has not speculated and subtilized himself into a persecutor, can so quiet every sense of pity, when he reflects that all the misery his eye can reach within the widest circle of individual observation, is but a small speck, a portion scarcely perceptible in the vast mass which even his own country suffers? Do they know, these with their impudent and inhuman prattle about temporary causes, what the approaches to *famine* are? Do they know that it is arrived at through ills almost as bad as famine itself? Do they know the disorders incident to it, and that come before it, and which are now actually sustained by the poor of this island? Do they know that it is begun in *these very temporary causes*, which contain within themselves, cold, nakedness, disease, and every practical evil that lace-

rates

rates the tender frame of infancy and age, and that scourges the proweſſ, and ſubdues the patience and ſturdineſſ of oppoſing youth? These, and thousands more than the moſt diligent benevolence can ever reach, all of a diſtinct deſcription and degree, cry out, each in their own agonizing accents, for compaſſion and relief. In this common wreck, who ſhall diſtinguiſh the firſt ſufferers from the laſt? Whoſe will be that ſteady eye that can range over heaps of the dying wretches who lie in his path at every ſtep, and hunt for the marks of a royaliſt before he adminiſters the ſaving cordial to his lips? “We are not made to pity the oppreſſor and the oppreſſed.”—No, moſt certainly. But who, in the vale of horrors we tread in at home, who, in the wide waste of deſolation that covers the face of half the world, can even tell which is the oppreſſed and which the oppreſſor? The OPPREſſORS! Alas, the true ones are on both ſides too ſafe! They are

are in Cabinets. They are in Directories:---far removed from the din and danger of the battle. There is no getting at and punishing the *Septembrizers* of Paris, and the makers of patriotic marriages, and those who shot *mitraille* among their victims crowded together in the squares of Lyons and the dungeons of Avignon. There is no bringing those Tyrants who swore in cold blood at Pilnitz the destruction of French liberty in its cradle, and have fought it through murder and massacre of every description and degree, to the bar of an insulted world. The great Disposer of events has ordered it otherwise; and that each of the parties in this horrid contest should prove (for the present at least,) the one a tyranny ten times worse than it has shaken off, the other *real* calamities, more various and ten times more dreadful than those which it has attempted to avert.

Greatly mistaken am I, indeed, if considerations of this kind would have had no weight

weight with such a mind as Lord Keppel's. No hatred of the French regicides would have steeled his heart against the sufferings of humble industry, whose happy ignorance had escaped either of the jargons now in fashion, whether with the desperate preachers of Jacobinism, or the servile flatterers of a court. In lamenting those sufferings, I do not think that he would have considered himself as taking part with those regicides.

In his deliberations on the expediency of a war with France, surely Lord Keppel was the man of all others to examine well and maturely, in what manner his means were adapted to his end. Above all things he would have taken care to know what that end was, and to be thoroughly satisfied that it was good. If, from motives of policy, he had not chosen to *declare* a specific object, he would have *had* a specific object. Convinced that his end was right, he would have gone to it strait forwards. In him we should have

seen none of the tricking compromises which sent this war into the world, stained, and blown upon in its cause and principle, from the scandalous duplicity of its declared purposes. Lord Keppel would not have rashly declared for a war on *any* principle, and taken his chance for putting it upon a good one. Following Mr. Burke, if we can so suppose him, into a war for the restoration of the subverted Monarchy of France, he never, to accommodate a minister who talked *about it and about it* only for the sake of destroying a political party, would have consented in its very outset to cheat one half of the public and betray the other, by suffering that war to be said to be for the navigation of the Scheldt, or for a West-India island or two more or less. He would hardly have consented to the robbery, under the name of indemnification, of “the country of his descent,” when “the country of his birth” could no longer protect it.

If he had differed from you with regard to the propriety of an early recognition of the French Republic—(how bitterly we rue the day when others of your connexions failed you there!)—is it to be credited that he would have formed hollow alliances, and personally connected himself, and made common cause with, your most determined, implacable, and malignant enemies?

If, disregarding all personal affections, forgetting the unatoned-for crimes of the present minister against the House of Commons, abandoning all those principles which—O, enviable man!—have made his life one scene of unvaried virtue, without the intermixture even of a stain by chance—if, after ineffectual struggles to prevent, he had at last embarked in that ill-omened union, which surrendered up the Duke of Portland to Mr. Pitt, how long could he have borne to continue in it? Would his indignant pride have tolerated the treatment to Lord Fitz-William? Would

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his sound judgment have sanctioned the measures which are ruining Ireland ?

But if, after combating in vain to destroy regicide in France, after convincing himself that to all human means it was impossible, awakened to the cries of a suffering world clamouring out with one voice “ PEACE, “ PEACE ”—his mind had at length been made up to the necessity of recognizing the French republic, in what language would he not have been sure to address himself to those whom we may suppose his colleagues ?— Were it greatly to violate probability to conceive that to ONE of them he might have said—“ My Lord Duke, upon the death of “ Lord Rockingham, it was Charles Fox “ who placed you at the head of the Whigs “ in preference to the Duke of Richmond. “ If gratitude be no word for either of you “ to use towards the other, reflect upon the “ PUBLIC PRINCIPLE which produced in “ 1782 the resignation of the party at the “ head

" head of which he placed you. Reflect  
 " upon the issue to which the constitution  
 " was brought the next year. Reflect upon  
 " the differences, FUNDAMENTAL and IR-  
 " RECONCILEABLE, we then declared from  
 " the present minister. We declared that  
 " *he and the Constitution could not exist toge-*  
 " *ther.* Remember too, yet more than all,  
 " the principles upon which our then ene-  
 " mies acted; and that the man for whom  
 " we are now sacrificing repose, comfort,  
 " conscience, and that fair fame through  
 " which alone we can mount to heaven, was  
 " the first author of the Jacobin cry against  
 " Aristocracy, which has convulsed us all  
 " with such dire alarms. If the persuasion  
 " of the justice and necessity of a war with  
 " France upon Mr. Burke's principles, in-  
 " duced us to suspend our opposition, and  
 " afterwards to separate ourselves yet more  
 " decidedly from Mr. Fox by accepting  
 " offices under the Crown, what did we in-

“ tend? Was it mere impatience of a toil-  
“ some occupation, was it a preference of  
“ Mr. Pitt, or any belief in his amended  
“ principles, or the superior integrity of his  
“ character? **MY LORD, YOU ASSURED ME**  
“ OTHERWISE. You told me it was to de-  
“ stroy the regicide government of France.  
“ You told me that Mr. Fox and yourself  
“ thinking differently on the policy, **or**  
“ justice, of carrying on a war for this pur-  
“ pose, no other choice was left you except  
“ that of joining Mr. Pitt, or any other man  
“ who thought as you did. To me you ex-  
“ pressed the deepest sense of pain and regret,  
“ both for the new friendships you were  
“ forming, and for the old ones you were to  
“ abandon. How comes it then, my Lord,  
“ that now, after sacrificing your friend to  
“ preserve certain principles, you consent to  
“ sacrifice the principles themselves?—You  
“ left him, because he advised you to recog-  
“ nize the republic of France: yet, step by  
“ step,

" step, you have been brought to recognize  
 " that republic by Mr. Pitt. You left him,  
 " because he would not consent to a war to  
 " extirpate *Jacobinism*; yet Mr. Pitt has  
 " persuaded you to assist in negotiating a  
 " peace, *Jacobinism* remaining unconquered,  
 " untouched by all your efforts; and exhi-  
 " biting triumphantly to the world its pro-  
 " geny, the present constitution, founded in  
 " spite of us all, upon *Jacobin* liberty, *Jacobin*  
 " equality, and *Jacobin* rights of man. Is this  
 " acting wisely to your country, fairly to us,  
 " honestly to Mr. Fox, or decently to your-  
 " self? For me, my Lord, I will have no  
 " hand in these measures. Let us not lose  
 " the DECORUM of our principles. Let us  
 " prosecute the war until our original object  
 " be obtained; if counteracted, let us RE-  
 " SIGN: but if peace must be made on the  
 " ideas, and in the mode, which Mr. Fox  
 " has so often told us we must accede to, let  
 " us call for him to negotiate it, or take no  
 " part in it ourselves."

Such,

Such, if he had ever been persuaded to take part in the administration at all, would most assuredly have been the language and conduct of Lord Kepel.—To what degree he might have conceived Mr. Burke to merit the praise, or the reproach, of being the author of the war, surely is for none of us to answer. But although I am willing to do full justice to Mr. Burke,—although I thoroughly comprehend what he means by “a war on his own principles,”—although I am ready to admit that his experiment never has been tried, and that, instead of a false and hollow scheme, now calling itself monarchy, now republic, now dismemberment, scandalizing and disgusting all mankind by its treacherous instability, Mr. Burke would probably have advised a better,—although it be clear that a manly recognition of the young monarch upon the murder of his father, was the only way to keep alive, and to concentrate what was left of royalism in the French nation,—although it was only thus that, if EXAMPLE

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in this contest be worth any thing, Monarchy and its just supports could be exhibited in fair, and advantageous contrast, to Jacobinism and its crimes,—although, Sir, I am ready to make these large admissions to Mr. Burke, still I cannot consent to exempt him from *all* share of responsibility for the war, even as it now stands. Mr. Burke, and those who followed him, are accused of having listened too much to resentments, which led them to destroy the party to which they had been attached, *because* that party was the chief support of the man with whom they had quarrelled. They are accused of a preliminary sacrifice to the minister, not only of the old principles which had governed them in opposing, but of the new ones by which they professed to be actuated in assisting, his administration. They are accused of coming afterwards into public situations, without any stipulations for public objects; and thus, by the unconditional surrender of their trust in the first instance, and

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rash coalition in the second, of having subverted all that remained of respect and reverence for the characters of public men, and invested the minister with that immense power by which he has been enabled to make and continue a war, not such as they possibly would have declared, but unprincipled and unfortunate, such as is that in which we are now engaged.

I hope that an honest mistrust of these refinements, and the keeping aloof from such alliances, will not be deemed unbecoming in those who never could discover any thing similar to them, or congenial, in Lord Keppel's disposition. Indeed, until Mr. Burke can settle in his own mind the sort of support he expected from him, he may well pardon the hesitation of those who are the best inclined to follow what they might think Lord Keppel's wishes. The differences between Mr. Burke and the present ministers, with regard

to the war, are \* “ FUNDAMENTAL and IR-  
“ RECONCILEABLE.” The one would have  
restored a monarchy :—the others would shut  
up a river. † The one would have declared  
the restoration of monarchy to be his ob-  
ject : the others profess themselves very  
ready to take monarchy, if it should fall  
in their way, but attempt nothing to  
obtain it. To patch up an administration,  
a middle point has been found between the  
disciples of the two sects. *Civil society,*  
*as happily established among the nations of*  
*Europe—a Government capable of maintaining*  
*the accustomed relations of peace and amity;*  
—these are become the bonds of their union,  
and the catch-words of their consistency.

\* Words of Sir Gilbert Elliott in speaking of the  
differences between the ministry and the opposition,  
on the day of his moving the impeachment of Sir  
*Elijah Impey.*

† “ A war for the Scheldt !” exclaimed Mr. Burke  
in one of the first debates—“ A war for a *pot de*  
*chambre !* ”

By such means each of the parties to this coalition hopes to bind and manacle the other. Mr. Pitt makes sure of the Whig seceders, by pledging them to a system which does not exclude negotiation with a republic. The Whig seceders *did* make sure at first,—their expectation is perhaps cured,—of forcing Mr. Pitt to go with them into a war for the monarchy. Hence, parliamentary declarations of a readiness to negotiate with a republic—Hence, royal proclamations to French garrisons to surrender to “their lawful king,” Louis the XVIIIth. Hence, expeditions to the West Indies taken up, abandoned, and taken up, and abandoned again. Hence, expeditions to Belleisle and Quiberon ; and thy loss, SOMBREUIL ! brave hope of banished France ! last effort of her valorous virtue ! whose cause I honoured in thee, and even thy enemies could not hate ! What is to be understood in all this ? In which of these systems has Mr. Burke assigned Lord Keppel his part ? Would he  
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have concurred with Mr. Windham and Mr. Pitt in announcing on the first of the present session the arrival of THE HAPPY CRISIS through which France was to return to views of justice, humanity, and moderation, or would he have joined Mr. Burke in holding up to the hatred and derision of mankind their “councils of elders and councils of “youngsters,” and averted his eyes, as from the consummation of shame and horror, from the “PROSPECT of a REGICIDE “PEACE?”

Until he can resolve me this, Mr. Burke must not take offence that I dissent from his opinions as far they are vouched for on Lord Keppel’s authority. Be they ever so sound and wise, the *gist* and force of what I might consider as his call on me, is lost unless *they are Lord Keppel’s*. In the mean time, Sir, and until the inventors of the opposite systems shall condescend to make them

intelligible, I never can regret having followed the plain, and practical politics of your's. What has been your success, is neither for me, nor for those generous friends who act with you in Parliament, to calculate or to mind. This be their care who worship the divinity of fortune. *Disce puer VIRTUTEM ex me, VERUMQUE LABOREM;—fortunam ex aliis:—* Your life has long repeated to me this precept. He learns not little who learns nothing else.

I have done, Sir. If it signified much to shew, that Mr. Burke was *totally mistaken* in his account of the means by which any part of the Duke of Buckingham's estate came into the possession of the House of Russel, I could easily turn to history for the proof. If the use made of this vast inheritance by its present possessor were fit matter for discussion, I would carry Mr. Burke to his tenantry at Woburn and Tavistock. I would

would shew him what that noble person had added to his country, at “his few and idle “ years,” in the way of ornament and use ; with what works of magnificence he had decorated its surface, how he had improved its soil, what advancements had been made by his means in the science of agriculture through a series of operose and expensive experiments. These in any other times would have wrung, even from Mr. Burke, his reluctant praise, and forced him to exclaim with the philosophic king of Brobdignag, *that he who made two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before, was worth all the speculative politicians that ever lived.* More, indeed, it would not be fit for me to undertake : for if the sharp invective of Mr. Burke’s Letter should encourage any proud antagonist in another place to repeat its charges, or tempt some lively peerling, fatally desirous of distinguishing himself, to copy its language, you will agree with me

that he cannot be in better hands than the  
Duke of Bedford's.

I am, &c. &c.

ROBERT ADAIR.

March 21, 1796.

FINIS.



